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## Jehovah's Witnesses and Blood Transfusion

REGARDING JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES and hemodilution as a blood transfusion alternative, there is a method that has been accepted by the Witness community under circumstances that are acceptable to both them and me. It requires that when we take the blood off, we do not disconnect it on its way back to the patient and that we keep it running with a continuous infusion pump at all times. We are meticulous about doing this. They have accepted that we are honest and can do this, and we have a number of these patients who come to us for this surgery. We do, however, now state emphatically that we have had to transfuse only two patients and that we are not going to allow death to occur—if it came to a life or death situation, we would get a court order. We tell the patients that beforehand. The community in the Seattle area has accepted that we do not plan to give them blood at the drop of a hat, and they have accepted this prior knowledge that, in fact, we might transfuse them if it is a matter of life or death.

-ERIC B. FURMAN, MD

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